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Serial No. 09/938,485

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Docket No. 1484.1007

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-27, 29-37, 39-46, and 48-56, in view of the following.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A related documents processing device, associating relevance among at least separately created documents, comprising:

a detector detecting relevance among the separately created documents; and

a locator locating a timewise latest document related to a document selected based on detected relevance information,

wherein the documents are electronic mail (emails), and the relevance information detected by the detector ~~is includes~~ an email exchange history of a the electronic mail branching of separate emails from a first email, with the branching of emails including at least two distinct time-wise non-sequential emails branching from the first email on a same branch of the branching of emails and/or at least two distinct time-wise sequential emails branching from the first email on different branches of the branching of emails.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 1, wherein the documents have header information, and the detector detects the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 2, wherein the detector detects a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least a timewise order.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 1, further comprising a display unit for displaying contents of the document located by the locator.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 4, wherein the

Serial No. 09/938,485

Docket No. 1484.1007

display unit displays the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detector.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 5, wherein a specific document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the display unit is processed as the selected document at the locator.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 2, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 5, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the display unit displays the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

9. (CANCELED)

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 1, wherein a timewise latest electronic mail located by the locator is subjected to a return mail processing.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A related documents processing device, associating relevance among at least separately created documents, characterized in that it comprises:  
a detector detecting relevance among the separately created documents; and  
a document editor parsing an overlapped portion among related documents based on detected relevance information and for merging the documents with the overlapped portion eliminated,

wherein the documents are electronic mail (emails), and the relevance information detected by the detector ~~is includes~~ an email exchange history of the electronic mails branching of separate emails from a first email, with the branching of emails including at least two distinct time-wise non-sequential emails branching from the first email on a same branch of the branching of emails and/or at least two distinct time-wise sequential emails branching from the

Serial No. 09/938,485

Docket No. 1484.1007

first email on different branches of the branching of emails.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 11, wherein the document editor merges the documents according to an order of the related documents.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 11, wherein the documents have header information, and the detector detects the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 13, wherein the detector detects a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the timewise order.

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 11, further comprising a display unit for displaying the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detector.

16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 15, wherein the document editor merges documents, including a document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the display unit up to a timewise latest document related to the selected document, and the display unit displays the merged document.

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 13, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

18. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to cClaim 15, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the display unit displays the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

Serial No. 09/938,485

Docket No. 1484.1007

19. (CANCELED)

20. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer readable recording medium having ~~acomprising computer readable code program recoded thereon, the program makes to control a computer function as to perform a method of related documents processing to associate~~ relevance among at least separately created documents, the method comprising:

~~a detector detecting relevance among the separately created documents; and~~  
~~a locator locating a timewise latest document related to a document selected based on detected relevance information,~~

wherein the documents are electronic mail (emails), and the relevance information detected by the detector includes an email exchange history of the electronic mail a branching of separate emails from a first email, with the branching of emails including at least two distinct time-wise non-sequential emails branching from the first email on a same branch of the branching of emails and/or at least two distinct time-wise sequential emails branching from the first email on different branches of the branching of emails.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 20, wherein the documents have header information, and the ~~detector detecting of the relevance~~ includes detecting the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 21, wherein the ~~detector detecting of the relevance includes detecting~~ a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the timewise order.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 20, wherein the ~~program further makes the computer function as a display unit for the method~~ further comprising displaying contents of the located document located by the locator.

24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 23, wherein the ~~display unit the method further comprising displaying~~ the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detector.

25. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 24,

Serial No. 09/938,485

Docket No. 1484.1007

wherein a specific document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the display unit is processed as the selected document at in the locating of the timewise latest document locator.

26. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to claim 21, wherein the ~~detector detecting of the relevance further comprises~~ detecting a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

27. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to claim 24, wherein the ~~detecting of the relevance further comprises detector detecting~~ detecting a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the displaying unit displays the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

28. (CANCELED)

29. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to claim 208, wherein ~~a the located~~ the located timewise latest electronic mail ~~located by the locator~~ is subjected to a return mail processing.

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer readable recording medium ~~having a program recorded thereon, the program making~~ comprising computer readable code to control a computer function as to perform a method of related documents processing to associate relevance among at least separately created documents, the method comprising:

a detector detecting relevance among the separately created documents; and  
a document editor parsing an overlapped portion among related documents based on detected relevance information and merging the documents with the overlapped portion eliminated,

wherein the documents are electronic mail (emails), and the relevance information ~~detected by the detector~~ includes an email exchange history of a branching of separate emails from a first email, with the branching of emails including at least two distinct time-wise non-

Serial No. 09/938,485

Docket No. 1484.1007

sequential emails branching from the first email on a same branch of the branching of emails and/or at least two distinct time-wise sequential emails branching from the first email on different branches of the branching of emails~~the electronic mail.~~

31. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 30, wherein the ~~document editor~~merging comprises merginges the documents according to an order of the related documents.

32. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 30, wherein the documents have header information, and the detecting of the relevance comprises~~detector, detecting~~es the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

33. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 32, wherein the ~~detector~~detecting of the relevance comprises detectings a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputtinges the relevance information including at least a timewise order.

34. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 30, wherein the method further comprising ~~program further makes the computer function as a display unit for displaying the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detector.~~

35. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 34, wherein the ~~document editor merging documents, comprises merging including a document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the display unit and up to a timewise latest document related to the selected document, and~~with the display unit displaying further comprising displaying the merged document.

36. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 32, wherein the ~~detector~~detecting of the relevance comprises detectings a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputtinges the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

Serial No. 09/938,485

Docket No. 1484.1007

37. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to cClaim 34, wherein the ~~detector~~detecting of the relevance comprises ~~detectings~~ a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and ~~outputtings~~ the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, ~~and with the displaying further comprising the display unit displaying~~ the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

38. (CANCELED)

39. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for processing related documents, associating relevance among at least separately created documents, which comprises:  
~~a detecting step of detecting~~ relevance among the separately created documents; and  
~~a locating step of locating~~ a timewise latest document related to a document selected based on detected relevance information,

wherein the documents are electronic mail (emails), and the relevance information detected by the detecting step ~~is includes~~ an email exchange history of the electronic mails branching of separate emails from a first email, with the branching of emails including at least two distinct time-wise non-sequential emails branching from the first email on a same branch of the branching of emails and/or at least two distinct time-wise sequential emails branching from the first email on different branches of the branching of emails.

40. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 39, wherein the documents have header information, and the ~~detecting of the relevance step includes~~ comprises detecting the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

41. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 40, wherein the ~~detecting step includes~~ of the relevance comprises detecting a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least a timewise order.

42. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 39, ~~wherein the locating step of the timewise latest document includes~~ comprises a displaying step of displaying contents of the located document.

Serial No. 09/938,485

Docket No. 1484.1007

43. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 42, wherein the displaying ~~step includes~~ comprises displaying the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information ~~detected by the detecting step.~~

44. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 43, wherein the locating ~~step includes~~ of the timewise document further comprises processing a specific document as the selected document, the specific document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view ~~by the displaying step.~~

45. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 40, wherein the detecting ~~step of the relevance comprises~~ includes detecting a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

46. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 43, wherein the detecting ~~step includes~~ of the relevance comprises a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, ~~and with the displaying the displaying step includes~~ further comprising displaying the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

47. (CANCELED)

48. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 40~~7~~, wherein ~~a the located timewise latest electronic mail located by the locating step is~~ subjected to a return mail processing.

49. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for processing related documents, associating relevance among at least separately created documents, which comprise ings:  
a ~~detecting step of~~ detecting relevance among the separately created documents; and  
a ~~merging step of~~ parsing an overlapped portion among related documents based on detected relevance information and merging the documents with the overlapped portion



Serial No. 09/938,485

Docket No. 1484.1007

eliminated,

wherein the documents are electronic mail (emails), and the relevance information ~~detected by the detecting step is an~~ email exchange history of the electronic mail ~~a branching of separate emails from a first email, with the branching of emails including at least two distinct time-wise non-sequential emails branching from the first email on a same branch of the branching of emails and/or at least two distinct time-wise sequential emails branching from the first email on different branches of the branching of emails.~~

50. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 49, wherein the ~~merging step comprises~~ includes merging the documents according to an order of the related documents.

51. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 49, wherein the documents have header information, and the ~~detecting of the relevance comprises~~ detecting step includes detecting the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

52. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 51, wherein the ~~detecting of the relevance comprises~~ detecting step includes detecting a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the timewise order.

53. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 49, wherein the ~~detecting of the relevance comprises~~ detecting step including displaying the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the detected relevance information.

54. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 53, wherein the ~~merging step comprises~~ includes merging documents, including a document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view up to a timewise latest document related to the selected document, and with the displaying step includes further comprising displaying the merged document.

55. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to cClaim 51, wherein the ~~detecting step of the relevance comprises~~ includes detecting a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in

Serial No. 09/938,485

Docket No. 1484.1007

each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

56. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to ~~claim~~ 53, wherein the detecting step of the relevance includes comprises detecting a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, ~~and with the displaying step includes~~ further comprising displaying the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

57. (CANCELED)

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